

The VALLEY OF THE GIANTS

BY PETER B. KYNE
AUTHOR OF "CAPPY RICKS"
COPYRIGHT, BY PETER B. KYNE

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Pioneer in the California redwood region, John Cardigan, at forty-seven, is the leading citizen of Sequoia, owner of mills, ships, and many acres of timber, a widower after three years of married life, and father of two-day-old Bryce Cardigan.

CHAPTER II.—At fourteen Bryce makes the acquaintance of Shirley Sumner, a visitor to Sequoia, and his junior by a few years. Together they visit the valley of the Giants, sacred to John Cardigan and his son as the burial place of Bryce's mother, and part with mutual regret.

CHAPTER III.—While Bryce is at college John Cardigan meets with heavy business losses and for the first time views the future with uncertainty.

CHAPTER IV.—After graduation from college, and a trip abroad, Bryce Cardigan comes home. On the train he meets Shirley Sumner, on her way to Sequoia to make her home there with her uncle, Col. Pennington. Bryce learns that his father's eyesight has failed and that Col. Pennington is seeking to take advantage of the old man's business misfortunes.

CHAPTER V.—In the Valley of the Giants young Cardigan finds a tree felled directly across his mother's grave. Indications are that it was cut down to secure the burial, and evidence seems to show that Pennington and his woods-boss, Jules Rondeau, are implicated in the outrage.

CHAPTER VI.—Dining with Col. Pennington and his niece, Bryce finds the room paneled with redwood burl, confirming his suspicions of Pennington's guilt. In a diplomatic way, unperceived by Shirley, the two men declare war.

CHAPTER VII.—Pennington refuses to renew his logging contract with the Cardigans, believing his action means bankruptcy for the latter. Bryce forces Rondeau to confess he felled the tree in the Valley of the Giants, at Pennington's order. After punishing the man, Bryce buries him at Col. Pennington's, who, with Shirley, had witnessed the fight. Pennington is humiliated, and the girl indignantly orders Bryce to leave her and forget their friendship. He leaves, but refuses to accept dismissal.

CHAPTER VIII.—Returning to Sequoia, the train on which Shirley, her uncle, and Bryce are traveling, breaks away from the locomotive, and Bryce, who could have escaped, at the risk of his life cuts out the caboose and saves them from certain death, being painfully injured in doing so.

CHAPTER IX.—Moira McTavish, childhood friend of Bryce and employed in his office, makes Shirley's acquaintance and the two become friends. Needing money badly, John Cardigan offers to sell Pennington the Valley of the Giants, but the Colonel, confident the property must be his through the bankruptcy of his enemies, contemptuously refuses. Unknown to her uncle, Shirley buys the Valley and the Cardigans have a new lease of business life. They interest capital and decide on a scheme to parallel Pennington's logging railroad.

CHAPTER X.—Buchanan Ogilvy, railroad contractor and Bryce's college friend, is decided on by the Cardigans as the man to figure as the builder of the proposed railroad. Bryce goes to San Francisco to meet him.

CHAPTER XI.—Ogilvy ostentatiously begins work of surveying for the line, which is announced as a proposed through route. Pennington, vaguely alarmed, decides to block operations by making it impossible to secure a franchise for the line through Sequoia. In this he plans to enlist the aid of the mayor, Poundstone.

CHAPTER XII.—"Buck" Ogilvy, as builder of the projected Northern California & Oregon railroad, meets Moira McTavish and is much impressed. Bryce and his father make plans for securing a franchise for the line from the city council.

CHAPTER XIII.—Ogilvy, in a business interview, favorably impresses the Mayor, and later engages that official's son as attorney for the new road. Through him they obtain the temporary franchise. Pennington, finally convinced that the Cardigan interests are behind the scheme, sets to work to balk them.

CHAPTER XIV.—Pennington refuses Bryce the use of a locomotive and trucks to move equipment for laying a switch, and Bryce and Ogilvy plan to steal both and during the night put in a crossing cutting Pennington's tracks in the city. Pennington bribes Mayor Poundstone to ignore the temporary franchise granted and to refuse a permanent one. That night Pennington hears the Cardigan track-laying crew at work and hurries to the spot.

CHAPTER XV.

The success of Bryce Cardigan's plan for getting his rails down from Laurel creek depended entirely upon the whimsy which might seize the crew of the big mogul that hauled the last load of logs out of Cardigan's redwoods on Thursday afternoon. Should the engineer and fireman decide to leave the locomotive at the logging camp for the night, Bryce's task would be as simple as turning a hose down a squirrel hole. On the other hand, should they run back to Sequoia with the engine, he and Ogilvy faced the alternative of "borrowing" it from the Laguna Grande Lumber company's roundhouse; and that operation, in view of the fact that Pennington's night watchman would be certain to hear the engine leaving, offered difficulties.

Throughout the afternoon, after having sent his orders in writing to the woods-boss, via George Sea Otter (for he dared not trust to the telephone), he waited in his office for a telephone call from the logging camp as to what action the engine crew had taken. Finally, at a quarter of six, Curtis, his woods-boss, rang in.

"They're staying here all night, sir," he reported.

"House them as far from the logging as possible, and organize a poker game to keep them busy in case they don't go to bed before eight o'clock," Bryce ordered. "In the meantime, send a man you can trust—Jim Harding, who runs the big bull-donkey, will do—down to the locomotive to keep steam up until I arrive."

He had scarcely hung up when

Buck Ogilvy came into the office. "Well?" he queried casually.

"Safe-o, Buck!" replied Bryce. "Nothing to do but get a bite of dinner and proceed to business."

Buck insisted on keeping an engagement to dine with Moira, and Bryce agreed to call for him at the Bon Gusto restaurant. Then Bryce went home to dine with his father. Old Cardigan was happier than his son had seen him since the return of the latter to Sequoia.

"Well, sonny, I've had a mighty pleasant afternoon," he declared as Bryce led him to the dinner table. "I've been up to the Valley of the Giants."

Bryce was amazed. "Why, how could you?" he demanded. "The old skid road is impassable, and after you leave the end of the skid road, the trail in to mother's grave is so overgrown with buckthorn and wild lilac I doubt if a rabbit could get through it comfortably."

"Not a bit of it," the old man replied. "Somebody has gone to work and planked that old skid road and put up a hand rail on each side, while the trail through the Giants has been grubbed out and smoothed over. All that old logging cable I abandoned in those choppings has been strung from tree to tree alongside the path on both sides. I can go up there alone now, once George sets me on the old skid road; I can't get lost."

"How did you discover this?" Bryce demanded.

"Judge Moore, representing the new owner, called round this morning and took me in tow. He said his client knew the property held for me a certain sentimental value which wasn't transferred in the deed, and so the judge had been instructed to have the skid road planked and the forest trail grubbed out—for me. It appears that the valley is going to be a public park, after all, but for the present and while I live, it is my private park."

"This is perfectly amazing, partner," Bryce admitted. "Guess the new owner must be one of my old friends—perhaps somebody I did a favor for once—and this is his way of repaying. I'd like to know the name of the owner. I'd like mighty well to say thank you to him. It isn't usual for people nowadays to have as much respect for sentiment in an old duffer like me as the fellow has. He sort of makes me feel as if I hadn't sold at all."

Buck Ogilvy came out of the Bon Gusto restaurant with Moira, just as Bryce, with George Sea Otter at the wheel of the Napier, drove up to the curb. They left Moira at her boarding house, and rolled noiselessly away. At nine o'clock they arrived at Cardigan's log landing and found Jim Harding, the bull-donkey engineer, placidly smoking his pipe in the cab. Bryce hailed him.

"That you, Jim?"

"You bet."

"Run up to Jabe Curtis' shanty and tell him we're here. Have him gather his gang and bring two pairs of overalls and two jumpers—large size—with him when he comes."

Presently the woods-boss, accompanied by thirty of his best men, came down to the log landing. At Bryce's order they clambered aboard the engine and tender, hanging on the steps, on the roof of the cab, on the cow-catcher—anywhere they could find a toe-hold. Buck Ogilvy cut off the air; and the locomotive and tender began to glide slowly down the almost imperceptible grade. With a slight click it cleared the switch and slid out onto the Cardigan lateral, swiftly gathering speed. A quarter of a mile down the line Buck Ogilvy applied the brakes and eased her down to twenty miles per hour.

At the junction with the main line Buck backed briskly up into the Laguna Grande woods, and coupled to the two loaded flat cars. The woods gang scrambled aboard the flats, and the train pulled out for Sequoia. Forty minutes later they rumbled down Water street and slid to a grinding halt at the intersection of B street.

From the darkness of Cardigan's drying yard, where they had been waiting, twenty picked men of the mill crew now emerged, bearing lanterns and tools. Under Buck Ogilvy's direction the dirt promptly began to fly, while the woods crew unloaded the rails and piled them close to the sidewalk.

Suddenly a voice, harsh and strident with passion, rose above the thud of the picks and the clang of metal.

"Who's in charge here, and what in blazes do you mean by cutting my tracks?"

Bryce turned in time to behold Col. Seth Pennington leap from an automobile and advance upon Buck Ogilvy. Ogilvy held a lantern up to the Colo-



Surveyed Pennington Calmly.

nel's face and surveyed Pennington calmly.

"Colonel," he began with exasperating politeness, "I presume you are Colonel Pennington—my name is Buchanan P. Ogilvy, and I am in charge of these operations. I am the vice president and general manager of the N. C. O., and I am engaged in the blithe task of making a jump crossing of your rails. Have a cigar." And he thrust a perfect under the Colonel's nose. Pennington struck it to the ground, and on the instant, half a dozen rough rascals emptied their shovels over him. He was deluged with dirt.

"Stand back, Colonel, stand back, if you please. You're in the way of the shovelers," Buck Ogilvy warned him soothingly.

Bryce Cardigan came over, and at sight of him Pennington choked with fury. "You—you—" he sputtered, unable to say more.

"I'm the N. C. O.," Bryce replied. "Nice little fiction that of yours about the switch-engine being laid up in the shops and the Laurel creek bridge being unsafe for this big mogul." He looked Pennington over with frank admiration. "You're certainly on the job, Colonel. I'll say that much for you."

"You've stolen my engine," Pennington almost screamed. "I'll have the law on you for grand larceny."

"Tut-tut! You don't know who stole your engine. For all you know, your own engine crew may have run it down here."

"I'll attend to you, sir," Pennington replied, and he turned to enter Mayor Poundstone's little diver.

"Not tonight, at least," Bryce retorted gently. "Having gone this far, I would be a poor general to permit you to escape now with the news of your discovery. You'd be down here in an hour with a couple of hundred members of your mill crew and give us the rush. You will oblige me, Colonel Pennington, by remaining exactly where you are until I give you permission to depart."

"And if I refuse—"

"Then I shall manhandle you, truss you up like a fowl in the tonneau of your car, and gag you."

To Bryce's infinite surprise the Colonel smiled. "Oh, very well!" he replied. "I guess you've got the bulge on me, young man. Do you mind if I sit in the warm cab of my own engine? I came away in such a hurry I quite forgot my overcoat."

"Not at all. I'll sit up there and keep you company."

Half an hour passed. An automobile came slowly up Water street and paused half a block away, evidently reconnoitering the situation. Instantly the Colonel thrust his head out the cab window.

"Sexton!" he shouted. "Cardigan's cutting in a crossing. He's holding me here against my will. Get the mill crew together and phone for Rondeau and his woods-crew. Send the switch-engine and a couple of flats up for them. Phone Poundstone. Tell him to have the chief of police—"

Bryce Cardigan's great hand closed over the Colonel's neck, while down Water street a dark streak that was Buck Ogilvy sped toward the automobile, intending to climb in and make Pennington's manager a prisoner also. He was too late, however. Sexton swung his car and departed at full speed down Water street, leaving the disappointed Buck to return panting to the scene of operations.

Bryce Cardigan released his hold on Pennington's neck. "You win, Colonel," he announced. "No good can come of holding you here any longer. Into your car and on your way."

"Thank you, young man," the Colonel answered, and there was a metallic ring in his voice. He looked at his watch in the glare of a torch. "Plenty of time," he murmured. "Curfew shall not ring tonight." Quite deliberately he climbed into the mayor's late source of woe and breezed away.

Colonel Pennington did not at once return to his home, however. Instead he drove up to the business center of the town. The streets were deserted, but one saloon—the Sawdust Pile—was still open.

Pennington strode through the bar and into the back room, where a number of poker games were in progress. For a moment he stood, his cold, ophioidian glance circling the room until it came to rest on no less a personage than the Black Minors, an individual with whom the reader has

already had some slight acquaintance. It will be recalled that the Black Minors led the futile rush against Bryce Cardigan that day in Pennington's woods.

The Colonel approached the table where the Black Minors sat thumbing the edges of his cards, and touched the cholo on the shoulder. The Black Minors turned, and Pennington nodded to him to follow; whereupon the latter cashed in his chips and joined his employer on the sidewalk. Here a whispered conversation ensued, and at its conclusion the Black Minors nodded vigorously.

"Sure!" he assured the Colonel. "I'll fix 'em good and plenty."

Together Pennington and the Black Minors entered the automobile and proceeded swiftly to the Laguna Grande Lumber company's mill office. From a locker the Colonel produced a repeating rifle and three boxes of cartridges, which he handed to the cholo, who departed without further ado into the night.

Twenty minutes later, from the top of a lumber pile in Cardigan's drying



Bryce Cardigan Saw the Flash of a Rifle.

yard, Bryce Cardigan saw the flash of a rifle and felt a sudden sting on his left forearm. He leaped around in front of the cowcatcher to gain the shelter of the engine, and another bullet struck at his feet and ricocheted off into the night. It was followed by a fusillade, the bullets kicking up the freshly disturbed earth among the workers and sending them scurrying to various points of safety. In an instant the crossing was deserted, and work had been stopped, while from the top of the adjacent lumber pile the Black Minors poured a stream of lead and filthy invective at every point which he suspected of harboring a Cardigan follower.

"I'd like to plug him," Buck murmured.

"What would be the use? This will be his last night in Humboldt county—"

A rifle shot rang out from the side of B street; from the lumber pile across the street, Bryce and Ogilvy heard a suppressed grunt of pain, and a crash as of a breaking board. Instantly out of the shadows George Sea Otter came padding on velvet feet, rifle in hand—and then Bryce understood.

"All right, boss," said George simply as he joined Bryce and Ogilvy under the lee of the locomotive. "Now we get busy again."

"Safe-o, men," Ogilvy called. "Back to the job." And while Bryce, followed by the careless George Sea Otter, went into the lumber yard to succor the enemy, Ogilvy set an example to the men by stepping into the open and starting briskly to work with a shovel.

At the bottom of the pile of lumber the Black Minors was discovered with a severe flesh wound in his right hip; also he was suffering from numerous bruises and contusions. George Sea Otter possessed himself of the fallen cholo's rifle, while Bryce picked the wretch up and carried him to his automobile.

"Take the swine over to the Laguna Grande Lumber company's hospital and tell them to patch him up," he ordered George Sea Otter. "I'll keep both rifles and the ammunition here for Jules Rondeau and his woods gang. They'll probably be dropping in on us about 2 a. m., if I know anything about Colonel Pennington's way of doing things."

Having dispatched the Black Minors to hold up the work until the arrival of reinforcements, Colonel Pennington fairly burned the streets en route to his home. He was desirous of getting into a heavy ulster before venturing forth again into the night air.

The violent slam with which he closed the front door after him brought Shirley, in dressing gown and slippers, to the staircase.

"Uncle Seth!" she called. "What's the matter?"

"There's the devil to pay," he answered. "That fellow Cardigan is back of the N. C. O. after all, and he and Ogilvy have a gang of fifty men down at the intersection of Water and B streets, cutting in a jump-crossing of our line."

He dashed into the living room, and she heard him calling frantically into the telephone.

"At last!" she murmured, and crept down the stairs, pausing behind the heavy portieres at the entrance to the living room.

But you, Poundstone?" she heard him saying rapidly into the transmitter. "Pennington speaking. Young Bryce Cardigan is behind that N. C. O. outfit, and it's a logging road and not intended to build through to Gran's Pass at all. Cardigan and Ogilvy are at Water and B streets this very instant with a gang of fifty men cutting in a jump-crossing of my line, curse them! They'll have it in by six o'clock tomorrow morning if something isn't done—and once they get it in, the fat's in the fire."

"Telephone the chief of police and order him to take his entire force down there, if necessary, and stop that work. To blazes with that temporary franchise! You stop that work for two hours, and I'll do the rest. Tell the chief of police not to recognize that temporary franchise. He can be suspicious of it, can't he, and refuse to let the work go on until he finds out? And you can be hard to find for two hours, can you not? Delay, delay, man! That's all I want. . . . Yes, yes, I understand. You get down about daylight and roast the chief of police for interfering, but in the meantime—"

"Thank you, Poundstone, thank you. Good-by!"

He stood at the telephone, the receiver still held to his ear and his right forefinger holding down the hook while the line cleared. When he spoke again, Shirley knew he was calling his mill office. He got a response immediately, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour.

"Sexton?" Pennington speaking. "I've sent over the Black Minors with a rifle and sixty rounds of ammunition. . . . What? You can hear him shooting already? Bully boy with a crockery eye! He'll clean the gang out and keep them from working until the police arrive. You've telephoned Rondeau, have you? . . . Good! He'll have his men waiting at the log landing, and there'll be no delay. Sexton, we've got to block them. It means a loss of millions to me if we fail!"

Shirley was standing in the doorway as he faced about from the telephone. "Uncle Seth," she said quietly, "use any honorable method of defeating Bryce Cardigan, but call off the Black Minors. I shall hold you personally responsible for Bryce Cardigan's life, and if you fail me, I shall never forgive you."

"Silly, silly girl!" he soothed her. "Don't you know I would not stoop to bush-whacking? There's some shooting going on, but its wild shooting, just to frighten Cardigan and his men off the job."

"You can't frighten him," she cried passionately. "You know you can't. He'll kill the Black Minors, or the Black Minors will kill him. Go instantly and stop it."

"All right, all right!" he said rather humbly, and sprang down the front steps into the waiting car. "I'll play the game fairly, Shirley, never fear."

She stood in the doorway and watched the red tail-light, like a malevolent eye, disappear down the street. And presently as she stood there, down the boulevard a huge gray car came slipping noiselessly—so noiselessly, in fact, that Shirley recognized it by that very quality of silence. It was Bryce Cardigan's Napier.

"George!" she called. "Come here."

The car slid over to the gate and stopped at the sight of the slim white figure running down the garden walk.

"Is Mr. Cardigan hurt?" she demanded in an agony of suspense.

George Sea Otter granted contemptuously. "Nobody hurt 'cept the Black Minors. I am taking him to your company hospital, miss. He tried to shoot my boss, so I shot him myself once through the leg. Now my boss says: 'Take him to the Laguna Grande hospital, George.' Me, I would drop this greaser in the bay if I was the boss."

She laughed hysterically. "On your way back from the hospital stop and pick me up, George," she ordered.

He touched his broad hat, and she returned to the house to dress.

Meanwhile Colonel Pennington had reached the crossing once more, simultaneously with the arrival of Sam Perkins, the chief of police, accompanied by two automobiles crammed with patrolmen. Perkins strutted up to Bryce Cardigan and Buck Ogilvy.

"What's the meaning of all this row, Mr. Cardigan?" he demanded.

"Something has slipped, Sam," Bryce retorted pleasantly. "You've been calling me Bryce for the past twenty years, and now you're mistaking me! The meaning of this row, you ask?" Bryce continued. "Well, I'm engaged in making a jump crossing of Colonel Pennington's tracks, under a temporary franchise granted me by the city council of Sequoia. Here's the franchise." And he thrust the document under the police chief's nose.

"This is the first I've heard about any franchise," Sam Perkins replied suspiciously. "Seems to me you been mighty secret about this job. How do I know this ain't a forgery?"

"Call up the mayor and ask him," Bryce suggested.

"I'll do that," quoth Mr. Perkins ponderously. "And in the meantime, don't do any more digging or rail-cutting." He hurried away to his automobile, leaving a Lieutenant in charge of the squad.

"Also in the meantime, young man," Colonel Pennington announced, "you will pardon me if I take possession of my locomotive and flat cars. I observe you have finished unloading those rails."

"Help yourself, Colonel," Bryce replied with an assumption of heartiness he was far from feeling.

"Thank you so much, Cardigan," With the greatest good nature in life, Pennington climbed into the cab, reached for the bell-cord, and rang the bell vigorously.

Then he permitted himself a triumphant throw of the whistle, after which he threw off the air and gently opened the throttle. He was not a locomotive engineer but he had ridden in the cab of his own locomotive and felt quite confident of his ability in a pinch.

With a creak and a bump the train started, and the Colonel ran it slowly up until the locomotive stood on the tracks exactly where Buck Ogilvy had been cutting in his crossing; whereupon the Colonel locked the brakes, opened his exhaust, and blew the boiler down. And when the last ounce of steam had escaped, he descended and smilingly accosted Bryce Cardigan.

"That engine being my property," he announced, "I'll take the short end of any bet you care to make, young man, that it will sit on those tracks until your temporary franchise expires. Out in your jump-crossing now, if you can, you whelp, and be d—d to you. I've got you blocked!"

"I rather imagine this nice gentleman has it on us, old dear," chirped Buck Ogilvy plaintively. "Well! We did our damndest, which angels can't do no more. Let us gather up our tools and go home, my son, for something tells me that if I hang around here I'll bust one of two things—this sleek scoundrel's gray head or one of my bellucose veins! Hello! Whom have we here?"

Bryce turned and found himself facing Shirley Sumner. Her tender lip was quivering, and the tears shone in her eyes like stars. He stared at her in silence.

"My friend," she murmured tremulously, "didn't I tell you I would not permit you to build the N. C. O.?"

He bowed his head in rage and shame at his defeat. Buck Ogilvy took him by the arm. "Bryce, old chap, this is one of those occasions where silence is golden. Speak not. I'll do it for you. Miss Sumner," he continued, "and Colonel Pennington," favoring that triumphant rascal with an equally gracious bow, "we leave you in possession of the field—temporarily. However, if anybody should drive up in a hack and lean out and ask you, just tell him Buck Ogilvy has another tramp tucked away in his kimono."

Bryce turned to go, but with a sudden impulse Shirley laid her hand on his arm—his left arm. "Bryce!" she murmured.

He lifted her hand gently from his forearm, led her to the front of the locomotive, and held her hand up to the headlight. Her fingers were crimson with blood.

"Your uncle's killer did that, Shirley," he said ironically. "It's only a

slight flesh wound, but that is no fault of your allies. Good-night."

And he left her standing, pale of face and trembling, in the white glare of the headlight.

He walked to his car and climbed into it. Ogilvy remained merely long enough to give orders to the foreman to gather up the tools, store them in the machine-shop of Cardigan's mill, and dismiss his gang; then he, too, entered the automobile, and at a word from Bryce, the car slid noiselessly away into the darkness. The track-cutting crew departed a few minutes later, and when Shirley found herself alone with her uncle, the tumult in her heart gave way to the tears she could no longer repress. Pennington stood by, watching her curiously, coldly.

Presently Shirley mastered her emotion and glanced toward him.

"Well, my dear?" he queried.

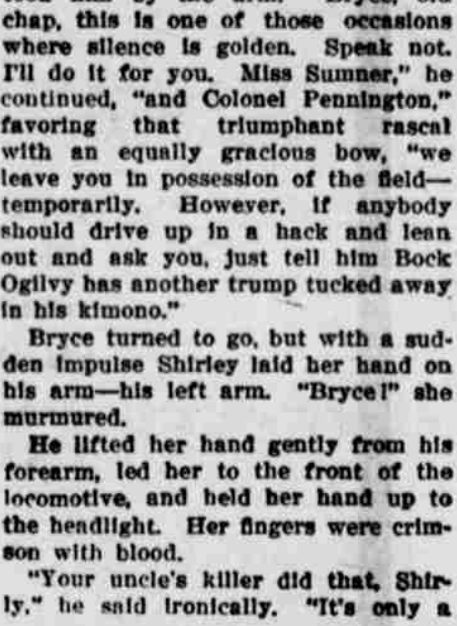
"I—I think I had better go home," she said without spirit.

"I think so, too," he answered. "Get into the mayor's flivver, my dear, and I'll drive you. And perhaps the least said about this affair the better, Shirley. There are many things that you do not understand and which cannot be elucidated by discussion."

"I can understand an attempt at assassination, Uncle Seth."

"That blackguard Minors! I should have known better than to put him on such a job. I told him to bluff and threaten; Cardigan, I knew, would realize the grudge the Black Minors has against him, and for that reason I figured the greaser was the only man who could bluff him. While I gave him orders to shoot, I told him distinctly not to hit anybody. Good Lord, Shirley, surely you do not think I would wink at a murder!"

(Continued next week.)



Your Uncle's Killer Did That, Shirley.